*The*
# COMMONWEAL

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## *How Important Are Unions?*

THE QUESTION, of course, is not how important labor unions are as units of organization in our economic and social life. As social, economic and political tools their importance can hardly be overestimated. Besides the Army, it is hard to name an institution so great in the management of power and the government of social and even personal life. The importance of labor unions as one of the instruments with which to get things done cannot be questioned. The great question concerns the original power of unions; their initiative and autonomy; their right, duty and ability to formulate policy and take charge of putting policy in practice—and of course it concerns their freedom.

During the war we expect all the different institutions of the country and their personnel to cooperate so closely in the prosecution of the war job that it becomes difficult to isolate from the common effort the ideas and initiatives and strength contributed by the different parties to this joint effort. But, in order to judge the times and plan for the future and influence the future to our liking, we should still try to assess the tendencies in the distribution of power and responsibility. We ought to try to know roughly whose ideas and whose policies and whose powers tend to dominate the united national effort. We would like greatly, also, to know what plans and hopes the different groups in which power resides actually have.

For the labor movement, this has become increasingly difficult. American trade unionists have never been long on philosophy, ideology or grand scale program—and few Americans regret it. Now, however, during this time of speeded and deepened change, when recognized and unrecognized enemies and friends of American labor and society are working furiously on their own elaborated plans, the need for adequate expression of labor's policy grows seriously. There are a hundred questions from the most elevated eternal queries to the most earthy matters of whose dollar is this and whose boss is that which demand answers. And an unusual number of answers are going to be given. It looks highly doubtful if American labor unions, in their present position, will have the importance they should have in making the answers.

It is a topic for books, but the first impediment appears to be the peculiar course of John L. Lewis and of his CIO opposition. We believe that as much public pressure as possible ought to be brought on Mr. Lewis to persuade him to state his case clearly. It is obvious he is not worried first about that money which the Miners gave and/or loaned to the CIO. Also, we think better of Philip Murray than to believe that his rather excessive displays of emotion have been caused by nervous jealousy over the prerogatives of his office as President of the CIO. Does Lewis think there should be one or three labor federations in the United States? Does Murray feel that two is indefinitely better than one? What relationship do these two leaders think ought to exist between the federal Executive and the labor unions? What do these men feel about amalgamating with the Stalinist and the British and the Mexican CTAL and other labor movements abroad and with the CP and the GPU at home? What are their wage policies for the duration? To what extent should labor have a legislative program, and what program? In what form, if any, will these leaders accept private property and what kind of socialism might they fancy? Who should control the plants, mines and farms? Have they any peace aims? For answers to these and hundreds of other crucial questions, there have been published so far only guesses and speculations. If labor wants autonomy, the leaders must develop their positions. And one of the root problems is that the internal organization of our unions gives the leaders top-heavy importance. Perhaps the first of all the questions for the public to ask is why does so much appear to depend upon the individual at the top in organizations which are supposed to be bulwarks of democracy? The men in the rank and file, which is a category bound to include a greater and greater proportion of us, must exercise with more energy our minds and our duties and our rights.



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*Tolan Report*

AFTER the flurry of interest which greeted the announcement of the evacuation of Japanese—both aliens and citizens—from the West Coast, this whole matter has ceased to attract public attention. When General Drum's East Coast order assuming similar powers was announced, it was very much taken for granted. There has been no proper or adequate discussion of the very serious implications in these two steps on the part of the government, particularly of the Army. Whether this lack of interest is reflected by, or occasioned by, the silence of the press is a question probably no one can answer, yet the fact remains that our newspapers and magazines have remained singularly quiet. Earlier this month the Tolan Committee of Congress—"investigating national defense migration"—published its fourth interim report, which is devoted largely to this subject. It is a forthright and important document, yet so far as the ordinary citizen is concerned, it might just as well never have been written for all the attention it has received.

The Committee finds that "a curtailment of the rights and privileges of the American-born Japanese citizens of this country will furnish one of the gravest tests of democratic institutions in our history." Any considered reflection on the subject cannot but lead us to agree. On the basis of a military order, which in turn was founded upon the President's Executive order of February 19, some thousands of American citizens were obliged to leave their homes and places of work and business and submit to virtual internment. No such step has ever before been taken in the history of our government. The Tolan Committee "is concerned lest this authority to employ either wholesale evacuation or selective processes may far outrun what we believe to have been the original intentions of the President in promulgating his Executive order." The Committee's concern is understandable and proper.

Is it possible that citizenship is another one of those high privileges to which we have all grown so accustomed that we forget what they mean? The concept of citizenship is at the same time one of the highest achievements and one of the most typical symbols of the spirit of our Western civilization. It has always been a thing to be prized, as guaranteeing to each citizen a certain specific status in the eyes of the law and thereby distinguishing him from other men, who are "subjects" and hold their liberties by sufferance of their rulers. A citizen has rights; a subject has privileges. A citizen is proud of his citizenship, and jealous of its prerogatives. Paul's insistence upon his rights as a Roman citizen has engraved itself on the consciousness of all Christians. He had a right to be heard by Caesar, and he would tolerate no judgment either by his own people or by King Agrippa or by Felix the Governor. "Hast thou appealed to Caesar? To Caesar shalt thou go."

Citizenship in America has meant that the citizen enjoys the full protection of the Constitution and the laws. This has always meant freedom of movement within the country and the free enjoyment of one's property. The only exception has been under martial law. And as the Tolan Committee points out, the courts have rather narrowly defined the conditions under which martial law may properly be declared. "Martial law is the law of military necessity in the actual presence of war. It is administered by the General of the Army and is, in fact, his will. Of necessity it is arbitrary, but it must be obeyed." It is impossible to see how this definition fits present conditions anywhere within the territorial limits of the United States, and it is equally difficult to find any justification for the compulsory moving of citizens. To quote once again from the Tolan Report: "The nation must decide and Congress must gravely consider, as a matter of national policy, the extent to which citizenship, in and of itself, is a guarantee of equal rights and privileges during time of war. Unless a clarification is forthcoming, the evacuation of the Japanese population will serve as an incident sufficiently disturbing to lower seriously the morale of vast groups of foreign-born among our people. . . . If the Japanese evacuation creates serious questions, it is because an entire group out of our population is being bodily removed, family by family. This is in the nature of an exodus of a people. The numbers involved are large, but they are by no means as large, for the whole country, as those who will be involved if we generalize the current treatment of the Japanese to apply to all Axis aliens and their immediate families. Indeed, this committee is prepared to say that any such proposal is out of the question if we intend to win this war."

The Tolan Committee strongly urges the President to issue a new Executive order which shall be less general than that of February 19 and which would serve to clarify the whole situation. On the face of it, the committee's recommendation deserves immediate attention.

*Corsica, Tunisia, Nice*

THE RULERS of European nations conquered by or allied to Germany are locked together in that same tortured symmetry which enchains half human fantasies of evil and despair in certain strange fifteenth century engravings. These pictures represented anger and lust and often, in bitter and self-destructive unity, groups of figures were shown devouring themselves and each other. Such were the antics of the damned. Such is the scene in Europe where the war has

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swept by like a fire to rage elsewhere. In the devastated and silent countries, in the defeated countries and in the countries defeated too but allied to Germany, in all that closed world which is the New Order, the leaders of nations are compelled to pursue an interminable and miserable debate; their peoples are silent. The war has passed elsewhere; the atmosphere is stifling and loathsome; Mussolini can raise his voice.

The peoples of Europe suffer, starve and fight—in the armies or in underground resistance—obedient or rebellious. We can understand the situation they are in. They are situated in war—in victory or in defeat. We know what is the lot of men in war and the lot of women and children in time of war and we know that there is still birth and death, love and separation, time and eternity. We know the design men form locked together in poverty and the design they form locked together in war; the designs are not very different. We know the human condition and no catastrophe—no earthquake, no flood, no war—does much to alter that condition—the fundamental nature of that trial—in which each man lives for so brief a time.

But this forgotten King, this Victor Emmanuel, reviewing his troops at Alessandria, this trivial Crown Prince, Umberto, reviewing his troops in or about the Casino of San Remo and avid to reach the Casino at Nice, with what dismal and irrelevant ambitions are they entering upon the scene? Thousands are dying daily at Kharkov, Rommel attacks in Libya, the Japanese think in terms of continents, the United Nations act in terms of the world—and these Italian assistants to Hitler's assistant set out to conquer the conquered. This is not war; it is the dance of death.

### *No Valmy*

THE CANVAS of this war is so broad, the misery and suffering it has occasioned so vast, that one item more or less makes little impact upon our heart. Yet in justice a few words should be said concerning one of the meanest political tricks yet to emerge from the nazi bag. When Germany invaded Russia, almost a year ago, there is little doubt that Hitler hoped to enlist the support of White Russian emigrés in his "anti-Bolshevik crusade." And these people all over the world were put in a cruel position. They had every reason to despise Stalin's régime, yet they were singularly attached to their country and can only have been repelled at the thought of its conquest by Germany. In most cases the latter sentiment proved stronger than the former. Only a handful let their patriotism be overcome by their hatred of the Soviets. The Grand Duke Vladimir, Romanoff pretender, the Metropolitan of Paris, General Denikin all refused to issue any manifestoes hailing the great crusade and urging Russians in exile to support German arms. So now the nazis would effect by force what they could not effect by persuasion. It is reported that all White Russians in occupied France (there are more than 60,000 of them, of whom 20,000 of military age) are to be forced to "vote" on the question. Those who support the crusade will be given the privilege of assisting it, either by fighting or by taking posts in occupied Soviet territories; those who persist in refusing to fight against their country will be considered suspect, and can starve.

### *For and Against Compulsion*

THE VAST sidereal sums needed to prosecute this war will probably exhaust the planning ingenuity of the nation's fiscal experts. One lode after another will have to be tapped. There must be recourse to sound economic computation—the "siphoning off" of the excess purchasing power and the equitable allotment, proportionately, of tax stresses; just as importantly there must be address, variation of appeal, psychological freshness, in bringing these needs and mounting stringencies before the people. In this connection a further word of approval might be said of the Treasury's campaign for voluntary bond and stamp buying. With relative quietness, it has been gaining momentum ever since the opening announcement a few weeks ago that the goal was 10 percent of the total national income. Now and then someone breaks into the news as a bond-buyer—currently the private who invested the whole of his 14-year savings (as a bartender) in one magnificent $5000 splurge. Now and then some movie star reminds us of the campaign by a speech from the screen. But there has been so little fanfare that it is particularly gratifying to learn to how great an extent the public has caught on. The sales for the greater half of May top those of April by almost 25 percent; already the month shows that almost half a billion has gone for bonds. The June quota is $800 million, and in July, the retail stores of the country will cooperate in raising an even billion by setting aside a brief period in which only bonds and stamps will be sold. This is all to the good, and there are other ways yet untried: to name but two, community drives for local war bond clubs, and the enlistment of children. These things will not themselves do the trick; but the voluntary method is so wholesome in itself, so productive of public education and so spiritually satisfying, that it should be solidly supported. Tough and good-humored, our people will take any tax their Congress imposes; but the voluntary virtues represent a separate potential, and one which it is especially healthy to stress in times of growing imposition.

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# *Justice To Our Allies*

## We must demonstrate our sincerity by treating our Asiatic friends and allies as equals, or stop talking.

*By* **Harry Paxton Howard**

A FEW WEEKS ago, 37 Chinese seamen from a United Nations freighter at Staten Island were arrested while walking along the street near their ship, crowded into a few cells at police headquarters and charged with "disorderly conduct"—though they were neither drunk nor disorderly, and had been offensive to no one. The same night, a dozen Chinese seamen from another United Nations freighter at Brooklyn were also placed under arrest and charged with "disorderly conduct"—after they had demanded their wages and shore leave from their British captain, and he had shot one of them dead. The seamen had "gained land," the New York *Times* remarked dryly, "but not as they had hoped."

Such incidents throw into glaring relief the contrast between our official avowals of friendship for China—which many of us feel in all sincerity—and our official policy of hostile discrimination against Chinese and consistent treatment of them as "inferiors." British seamen are not arrested for coming ashore at New York or at other American ports. In fact, "neutral" seamen such as the Swedes are not barred. They are whites, and they are welcome to come ashore for a little recreation. If any of them are arrested for "disorderly conduct," there will be some specific charge—and they will probably have had some fun out of it. But Chinese—who are at present our allies—are kept virtual prisoners on ship while in American ports, and become prisoners in police stations if they dare to step ashore.

Behind this grave discrimination against hard-working, courageous and often heroic Allied seamen of Asiatic race, there lies actual legal discrimination on our statute books. In the cases in New York last month, the careful New York *Times* originally presented the matter as a "conflict between the immigration laws and the desire of the sailors to come ashore," but an official of the Immigration Service denied this the following day. The denial, however, was evidently motivated by the desire to avoid responsibility at a time like this, when the courage and fortitude of the Chinese people—specifically including the Chinese seamen who risk death daily in carrying the seaborne cargoes which mean life or death to the Allied cause—have roused the admiration and respect of all decent Americans.

In fact, Federal officials both of the Immigration Service and of the Department of Justice had gotten together at once, but after the men were lodged in the police station and the Federal officials had gone into a "huddle"on the case, it was evidently realized that it was too "hot" to handle at a time when public opinion would be overwhelmingly against them. So it was announced as "strictly a police matter," and the Federal agents withdrew. After all, seamen can always be charged with "disorderly conduct," it seems.

The fact is that masters of vessels may be held responsible for the shore leave of seamen in cases where aliens are brought to the United States in violation of the Immigration Act. And the Immigration Act of 1924 provides specifically for the exclusion of "Asiatics"—which includes Chinese, Indians, Japanese, Burmese, Afghans and various other peoples of central, southern, eastern and southeastern Asia. Immigration of these great groups of Asiatics is not *restricted*. It is *prohibited*. Chinese, like Indians and other "Orientals," are officially "unfit" for immigration into the United States, or for naturalization as American citizens. But they are "fit" to fight as our allies against the Japanese, to fight under American officers for British Burma, to man ships—and go down on ships—carrying war cargoes to our beleaguered Allies across the oceans of the world!

### *Treatment shameful and revolting*

Samuel Grafton, the well-known columnist, was so disturbed by the shameful treatment of these Chinese seamen in New York that he burst out in his column in the New York *Post* on April 25:

> In the first place, such men are heroes; all sailors are heroes today. In the second place, they are of the United Nations, allies. While perhaps they may not be moved to kiss the soil of this arsenal of democracy, they might enjoy a stroll and a beer.
>
> But we keep them cooped up on ship (fascism stinks) and never allow them to land (fascism stinks) because we have an exclusion act against Orientals, which means against our allies, which means against common sense. . . . But if we had a brass band to greet those Chinese sailors, and some sort of USO to serve them, Goebbels would have nothing to quote, would he?
>
> . . . I say it is revolting that Chinese seamen should be kept behind gates at which they rush pathetically and uselessly, begging for shore leave; that one should be killed in



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some sort of mêlée called mutiny; that Chu Hsueh-fan, head of the Chinese Federation of Labor, should have to come here to plead for better conditions. I say we ought to be, not too noble, but too proud to allow this kind of nonsense.

But nothing has been done fundamentally to remedy the situation. Our racialist Exclusion Act still stands, and all the rulings and discriminations associated with it. Africans can immigrate and be naturalized, but not Orientals. Illiterates of the most backward European nations are legally "fit" for American citizenship, but the most gifted scholars of China and India are "unfit." Those are the actual provisions on our statute books, maintained by our courts, with regard to immigration and naturalization. Even persons of nationalities now classified as "enemy alien" can enter the United States, if they are "white" and have proper recommendations. But our Asiatic allies are not wanted; our laws treat them as "undesirable" and "unfit."

Many Americans are quite unaware of the nature of our anti-Asiatic laws, and believe it is simply a matter of "restricting immigration." This, however, is not the case. Immigration is covered by the 1924 Immigration Act, which restricted immigration in general to a small yearly quota from each foreign country, amounting to two per cent of the number of each nationality already in the United States. This restriction was promoted by American labor, and reduced the total immigration to some 165,000 yearly. Subsequent changes made a slight further reduction, and altered the proportions for various countries as adjusted to a "round" total of 150,000. The Chinese quota, on this basis, would have been less than 150 immigrants yearly. Figured in relation to the 1890 census (which was for some years taken as the base of the ratios), it would have been a couple of times higher.

But the Chinese—and other groups classified as "Asiatics"—were not restricted. They were *excluded*. This was not done upon economic grounds, but upon "racial" ones. There had already been Chinese exclusion acts, and there had also been court decisions which denied Chinese—and other "Asiatics"—the right to become American citizens. The 1924 Immigration Act utilized these court decisions to make its racial discrimination precise, and specifically prohibited the immigration of aliens "ineligible to citizenship." It may come as a shock to some Americans to learn that eligibility to citizenship depends on skin-color and "race" rather than upon education and integrity, but that is the actual legal situation. In fact, the Supreme Court of the United States in its momentous decision in 1922 stated specifically that "the culture or enlightenment" of the people involved "are not matters which can properly be taken into consideration."

It was in 1882, just sixty years ago, that the American Government started its official discrimination against Chinese, declaring them ineligible for citizenship and also suspending Chinese immigration for ten years. It is not necessary, at this point, to go into the sordid methods by which a group of race-conscious "whites" on the Pacific Coast (some of the most violent of whom were themselves immigrants from Europe) gained passage of the Act of 1882. The "issues" and conditions of those days have long since passed, but the discrimination thus started against the Chinese has grown and expanded into permanent exclusion, while American immigration officials have adopted most remarkable methods of discrimination and insult not only against the privileged minority of admissible Chinese (merchants, professional men, officials, etc.), but even against Americans of Chinese descent.

It is important to remember that the first "national boycott" launched by the Chinese was against the United States in 1905, in protest against our extraordinary "perpetual exclusion" law as well as our immigration officials' insulting treatment of an elderly Chinese scholar-official entering the United States to supervise China's generous contribution to the St. Louis Fair. It may do us good to remember that this "perpetual exclusion" law was passed at a time when our Government was warning the Chinese to remain neutral in the war between Russia and Japan on Chinese territory, and was giving all possible financial and diplomatic support to the Japanese in the aggressive moves which gave them domination of Korea and South Manchuria. If our Government has turned away from the anti-Chinese policies and attitudes of that time, it is high time that the change be given some concrete significance on our statute books.

### *Breaking up families*

One of the worst and most immoral aspects of our official treatment not only of Chinese, but of native-born Americans of Chinese descent, has been the breaking up of Chinese families. Since the beginning of our anti-Chinese legislation in 1882, Chinese immigrants were not permitted to bring in their wives and children. This has been a very serious thing among a people where everything centers around family life. And among the Chinese, as among other races, only a minority of men are temperamentally fitted for a celibate and lonely life. But a large proportion of Chinese here have actually lived such lives—showing under unnatural and difficult circumstances a standard of morality actually higher than some other immigrant groups. Our official treatment of Chinese in this respect has been both cruel and immoral. Many immigrants found themselves permanently separated from their families.

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The most extraordinary thing about this discrimination, however, is that it operates in favor of *aliens* against *citizens*. Chinese of the admissible group (merchants, etc.) are permitted to bring their Chinese wives and children with them, or to send for them after arrival. But native-born American citizens of Chinese descent are not permitted to send for eligible Chinese wives, or even to go to China and bring a China-born wife back with them. This is an instance of both racial and class discrimination. The "upper-class" Chinese alien has privileges which the ordinary American citizen of Chinese descent is denied.

Even the alien Chinese merchant, however, is subject to discriminatory treatment, often of the most insulting kind, at the hands of officials. A business trip to China may often result in difficulty when returning, when immigration officials may take it upon themselves to put the traveler through days of interrogation interspersed with insults, abuse and "What a liar you are!" Worst of all, however, is the treatment of these merchants' wives and children, if they are sent for and come in separately. They are held for weeks, sometimes months, under detention, being interrogated over and over again as to every detail of their homes and lives, in the hope of finding some discrepancy which will enable the officials to refuse them admittance. Many merchants prefer to live away from their families, rather than subject them to these indignities and discomforts. Wives as well as children of resident merchants have been held for months—sometimes as much as a year and a half—under detention and "examination." And have sometimes been sent back. Some merchants have saved their families such treatment by dividing their own time between their "business" life in America and their family life in China, but this is possible only for the well-to-do. And at the present time—thanks primarily to our cruel discrimination—some Chinese families are perhaps permanently separated.

### *Discrimination against other Asiatics*

The Chinese have been discriminated against more violently, and for a far longer period, than any other group of Asiatics. There has been both legal and illegal discrimination. In the "tough" days of half a century ago in the West, hundreds of Chinese were actually murdered, crippled, plundered and "burned out" by sadistic white men. The cases are rare where any legal punishment was meted out to the criminals responsible for such outrages, or even any compensation made by our Government to the victims or their families. These "tough" days, fortunately, appear to have passed. But there are still "Chinatowns"—virtual ghettos—where the Chinese, and native-born Americans of Chinese descent, are expected to live. They are excluded from white residential districts in many West Coast cities. There is discrimination and rudeness in barber shops, restaurants, theaters and many dance halls and other public places. And this discrimination is generally directed against *native-born Americans* of Chinese descent, who are now far more numerous than alien Chinese here. There is already a fourth generation of "Chinese" growing up in this country, as completely American in their habits, thoughts, customs and education as any other American group. But by the race-conscious "lily-white"—even by a European immigrant and his children—these Americans are regarded as "inferiors." For their faces reveal their "Asiatic" origin.

Our Naturalization Act of June 29, 1906, drew no "racial" lines, and an Act of Congress in May, 1918, granted citizenship to aliens serving with the American military forces. A number of Asiatics who had served with honor in our forces in the World War—like many Europeans—were granted citizenship upon this basis. But the Supreme Court of the United States, in a series of decisions between 1922 and 1925, ruled that "Asiatics" were unfit for American citizenship, and *revoked* the citizenship granted to Asiatics who had fought for us in the proudly proclaimed war to make the world safe for democracy.

It is important to understand the basis of the Supreme Court's decisions, which laid our Government open to a charge of bad faith to men who had risked their lives for their adopted country. Our early naturalization laws, from 1790 to 1870, restricted naturalization rights to "free white persons." Following the Civil War, and the abolition of slavery, naturalization rights were specifically extended to "aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent." It has been seriously questioned whether it was the intention of the American people and their representatives at that time (1870) to discriminate against Asiatics. The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which was adopted by most of the States of the Union after long deliberation and should bear more weight than ordinary legislation, stated specifically that the right of American citizens to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It is difficult to believe that the Americans who adopted this Amendment believed that naturalization rights should be denied or abridged by the United States on account of race or color.

The Supreme Court's decision, however, *"assumed"* that it was the intention of Congress in 1906 to maintain racial limitations on naturalization, though *no such restrictions were made* in the actual Naturalization Act of that year. The Court, further, asserted that "white person" was

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"confined to persons of the Caucasian race," that the appellant was "clearly of a race which is not Caucasian," and that such a decision was "sustained by numerous scientific authorities, which we do not deem it necessary to review." In fact, nothing is more nebulous and uncertain than the meaning of "Caucasian race," and the Court simply evaded the question of scientific authority for its classification. As regards "white" persons, there are many southern Europeans who are much darker than the average Chinese or Japanese. The Court's "scientific" assertions seem wholly untenable.

It may be said, indeed, that the Supreme Court's conceptions of "race," as evidenced by such decisions, are as completely unscientific as Adolf Hitler's. Furthermore, they have been clearly out of keeping with the spirit of the Fifteenth Amendment. For if we ban racial and color discrimination with regard to citizenship among the native-born, such discriminations are obviously wrong in determining fitness for citizenship among our foreign-born. The Supreme Court even took upon itself to *nullify*—in regard to Asiatics—the Act passed by Congress in 1918, and by this not only vetoed the decision of our elected representatives but laid the United States open to a charge of bad faith.

### *Urgent political importance*

For many years, our unjust and undemocratic discrimination against "yellow-skinned" aliens as well as citizens seemed to most Americans to be a "small" matter. But this day has passed. It is now a matter of urgent and enormous political importance. For the Chinese are our allies, and we are appealing to them and to other Asiatics for ever fuller co-operation against Japan. But our every profession of belief in "social rights and justice," and the "four freedoms" for all, is contradicted by our legal discrimination and our actual treatment of Asiatics—and even of Americans of Asiatic descent. Asiatic exclusion, and denial of naturalization rights, has always been insulting. But now the insult is to our allies—to people who have through years of war and suffering earned not merely the sympathy but the respect of every decent American, regardless of color.

High officials of the Chinese government have already asked for a "Pacific Charter"—a charter of freedom for the peoples of the Western Pacific and of Asia. Our Government has made no response. Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Generalissimo, has denounced the white "superiority complex" of Western Powers, and has called for a statement from us. She has spoken in terms which every believer in democracy must loudly applaud:

> What of the future? The West must revise its ideas about the East. . . . In the world society that we are going to create, there must be no thought of superiors and inferiors. We must be equal men and women of all ages, pressing forward to a great ideal.

If we believe in this, we must demonstrate it in action. We must repeal Asiatic exclusion, we must cease our cruel and shameful discrimination against Chinese seamen, we must lay it down clearly that the right of naturalization is not restricted by race or color, we must halt our discrimination against Americans of Asiatic descent. These things are not merely a matter of justice and right, but a matter of urgent political and national necessity. For if we want the peoples of Asia to fight side by side with us as equal allies, we must treat them as equals and not as inferiors.

# *Johnny Green, Stabilizer*

## What one Scotch working man has done for his industry, pointing to a possible solution for a National problem.

*By* **Frank Rahill**

THE OUTCOME of the National Shipbuilding Stabilization Conference, recently concluded in Chicago under the auspices of the War Production Board, is a happy augury for the success of America's herculean effort to launch ships faster than Hitler's submarines can sink them. After three weeks of deliberation and debate, representatives of labor, the shipbuilders, the Navy and the Maritime Commission have agreed upon a program which, for the first time since the application of the idea to shipbuilding, assures something like genuine country-wide "stabilization" for maximum production in the most vital of all our war industries, and clears the way for single-minded application by all parties concerned to the great task in hand. It is a triumph for the American spirit and American methods: full discussion, free choice, mutual concession—democratic give and take of equals around a conference table.

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In a special degree the outcome is a personal triumph for a wiry little Scotch-American with a ready tongue and a crooked smile who sat through every session of the long parley and acted as one of labor's principal spokesmen, John Green, international president of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, CIO. Stabilization is Green's baby; he has a paternal, a proprietary interest in it. It was he who first proposed the idea to the Maritime Commission in 1937, and ever since he has been beating the drum for it, without getting much encouragement. He took to throwing it, now and again, at the head of whatever government bureau or commission happened to be within range, hoping that it would stick. Finally, one day, it did. When our involvement in the war suddenly began to look imminent, late in 1940, the National Defense Advisory Council, realizing the plan's relation to wartime production, snatched it up on the initiative of Sidney Hillman (a formidable stabilizer in his own industry) and hurriedly arranged the meeting in Washington at which the Conference was formed, under the chairmanship of Morris L. Cooke. The Office of Production Management, taking over from the NDAC, and later the WPB, carried on, and pressed its adoption as an urgent defense measure. It was approved by the unions, the IUMSWA taking the lead, and put into effect in the summer of last year.

Stabilization is nothing more than a sensible working arrangement to assure job stability, maximum utilization of labor resources and maintenance of labor standards. Something like it exists in the needle trades, where, again, the idea, and the drive behind it, came from union labor. In shipbuilding it functions through a master compact designed to take the brakes off production, prevent interruptions of work, check labor migration and maintain orderly, democratic administration of employer-employe relations. Uniform wage scales in basic classifications are set up, strikes, lockouts and suspensions are barred, and machinery is prescribed for the handling of grievances, with a final resort to arbitration or mediation provided it becomes necessary. The plan divides the country into four zones, the Atlantic Coast, the Pacific Coast, the Gulf and the Great Lakes, and regional conferences in each work out details of application to local conditions. Sitting in for labor are the UMSWA and the Metal Trades Council of the AFL, represented at Chicago by John P. Frey.

The first stabilization conference, held early in 1941, and the implementing zone conferences which followed, set up scales of $1.12 an hour for first-class mechanics in three of the four zones, and proportionate scales for other classes of employes, along with premium pay rates, including double time for Sunday and holiday work and bonuses for work on night shifts. Provision was made for a review of wages in 12 months' time, with the understanding that percentage increases would be granted on the basis of living cost rises above 5 percent, following the example of Canada's war plan.

### *This year's conference*

This year's conference cancelled the double-time arrangement for Sunday and holiday work (which the IUMSWA had voluntarily waived in April at the behest of President Roosevelt), accepted the offer of the unions to settle for less than half the amount of the cost-of-living pay increases due them (they agree to take them in War Bonds and Stamps) and wiped out the single zone wage differential that had survived last year's negotiations—that favoring Gulf yards with a rate five cents an hour lower than the rest of the country. This last, making wage stabilization a reality, in principle at least, was a particularly gratifying victory for Green.

Johnny Green's preoccupation with the whole problem of stabilization began long before national defense became an issue and had its roots in something more personal and fundamental than the exigencies of production. The will o' the wisp of stability, especially stability in a decent job, has a special allure for him as for every man born and reared in the untidy world of shipbuilding, where nothing is stable but instability. The whole industry is the spoiled child of spendthrift wartime, and the neglected orphan of peace, at least with the improvident democracies. Its crazy fluctuations are familiar to us from the past thirty years. After having been the top producer of ships during the brief spurt of 1917-1919, America quickly dropped to nearly the bottom of the list; Hog Island, history's hugest ship incubator, became a desolate graveyard of rotting hulls. Sun Ship's force dropped from 10,000 men to 1,500. In the middle 30's Germany's launchings outdistanced ours seven to one, and from 1932 to 1939 Japan outproduced the whole of North America. The average annual output of all the democracies for the five years prior to 1939 was scarcely greater than that of our American yards alone in the second year's operation of the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

Now we are building again, frantically trying to make up for our neglect. One yard, the Sun Company's, in Chester, which had eight ways before the war, now has twenty, and eight more are under construction. The five hundred thousand workers now employed in shipyards will have been increased by three hundred thousand before the year is out, in our desperate effort to attain our appointed schedule of three ships a day.

These soaring peaks and yawning valleys of

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ship production spell economic dislocation, social waste and disaster—unemployment, decay of skills, want and crime, with labor as the chief sufferer. John Green saw the process working at close range during the last war and after—when building sank to a new low point and the blight spread over his native Clydeside. He was among its victims. It is this post-war depression in English shipbuilding, as a matter of fact, that America and the American labor movement can thank for Johnny Green. In 1921, when he was 27, he emigrated to America, as one way out of the difficulty, leaving his wife and their young daughter, neither of whom he was to see again for two years. He arrived here on July 4, appropriately enough for one who has become so staunch an American. His first job was at his trade of shipfitter in Cramp's, at Philadelphia. But it didn't last. The cycle he had left Scotland to escape was pursuing him here; Cramp's closed its gates. Periods of work at other industries in Philadelphia followed; Budd Wheel, Pitcairn Aviation, Atwater Kent Radio. But Johnny was a shipbuilder, and 1930 found him back at it in the tinshop of Camden's New York Ship, then as now engaged exclusively in naval work and hence not subject to quite the same runaway fluctuations as the ordinary commercial yard.

### *Unions collapse*

Trade unions are among the casualties of the kind of collapse the shipbuilding industry is periodically subject to, and this was especially true of the makeshift craft organizations that mushroomed in American yards during the last war. Only a few highly skilled and long organized trades, like machinists and sheet metal workers, retained any affiliation at all in the 30's, and unions enjoyed no genuine recognition at New York Ship or elsewhere in the industry, for that matter. Moribund unionism was reflected in labor standards. In the short work week in effect, $22 was the average wage a first-class mechanic earned, and machinery for handling grievances just didn't exist. The field was certainly ripe for an organizational drive, the more so since the Navy's shipbuilding program had got under weigh and management could look forward to a continual flow of contracts.

No one can size up this kind of situation better than Johnny Green, and early in 1933 the tinshop served as delivery room for Local No. 1, IUMSWA. It was an industrial union, the first in American shipbuilding, and proudly flaunted its character in its name; a highly skilled craftsman himself, Green had the vision and experience to understand that the multiplicity of shipyard trades and the necessity for solidarity and democracy in labor's ranks made this set-up imperative. The Industrial Union, as it came to be known, became one of the first of the independent groups to join (1936) the insurgent unions which walked out of the AFL's Atlantic City convention of 1935 to form the CIO. It was to demonstrate its right to march abreast of the United Mine Workers and the Amalgamated.

Green was no tyro in trade-unionism. While still in his teens in a Clydeside yard he had organized apprentices and led them in a strike back in 1916, for which he had to stand trial under the Defense of the Realm Act. Since coming to America his union interests and activities had not slackened; though not himself involved, he put his knowledge and gifts at the services of the Philco and SKF strikes in Philadelphia's Kensington during 1932 and 1933. It was New York Ship, however, which gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his talents as a leader, a tactician and a negotiator.

### *Strikes*

Management refused to bargain with the union and a seven-week strike followed, the entire force of 3,000 going out to a man. It ended in victory: a pay rise of 15 per cent and the first union contract signed by a major American shipyard since the war. Another walkout followed in 1935, lasting 15 weeks, and the arbitration award which settled it brought new benefits to the fledgling union, including pay increases, premium pay for overtime and dangerous work, seniority ratings, grievance machinery and the preferential shop in substance if not in form. Further gains were won in later contracts, gains which were to form the basis of the stabilization agreements; shipbuilding was becoming an industry that offered real attractions to good craftsmen selling their skills in the open market.

Meanwhile the Industrial Union, capitalizing on its Camden victories, expanded into a wider field, setting up locals in Chester, Wilmington, Bath and Quincy, which were to become nucleuses of a powerful Atlantic coast set-up; and the first national convention (1934), which elected Green as first president, drew up a vigorous and enlightened organization program (including a ban on all racial discrimination*), which has been pushed intensively ever since. The union's fixed policy has always been to spend income as fast as it comes in, never stinting organization work, on the principle that a growing, militant membership is a sounder asset, a better investment, than a fat treasury—the sort of thing which has para-

*The labor agreement covering the Higgins giant $32,000,000 "floating assembly line" yards, now being rushed to completion in New Orleans, breaks new ground in its specific provision for fair treatment of Negro workers. Forty percent of the skilled labor jobs are being allotted to them, and colored boys are being trained in the same proportion in the trade schools set up in connection with it.

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lyzed many an old-line craft union. Results have more than justified this course; progress has been steady on all fronts. The IUMSWA is authorized bargaining agent in eight of Bethlehem's nine East Coast yards and repair plants, and substantial progress has been made at Sun Ship, domain of the aggressively anti-Union Pews. The Wagner Act came at a crucial moment, aiding powerfully in checking the unfair practices of the powerful shipbuilders. Today 150,000 shipworkers of America carry IUMSWA cards.

### *Other activities*

The IUMSWA doesn't stop at the negotiation and enforcement of contracts and the handling of grievances, nor confine its activities to within shipyard gates. Stabilization itself, as a matter of fact, grew out of a study by Green and his board of strategy of a condition which was beyond the control of the industry itself, though it worked a continuing hardship on the great majority of ship workers. This was the periodic unemployment resulting from what is known in the trade as "sequence of jobs." Fifty-odd trades come into play in the building and outfitting of a ship, and, since the work is necessarily done in stages, all cannot be employed at the same time. Green's memorandum on the subject, addressed to the Maritime Commission in 1938, proposed, among other things, that the government allocate its contracts in such a way that all trades be continuously employed, if not in one yard, then in different yards in the same area. It was a practical program, sponsored by men who knew what they were talking about; men, furthermore, who could think constructively on a problem that was as much the responsibility of the nation and the community as it was of the trade union.

This particular problem, along with unemployment generally, has been solved automatically by the course of events in the last two years; the same process, however, has created other and no less pressing problems for workers. Some of these, likewise, are outside the scope of strict trade union activity, but that hasn't stopped Johnny Green from grappling with them. Green, called simply Johnny by everybody from apprentices to President Roosevelt, is as approachable as a bartender or a reporter, with none of the beetle-browed majesty and aloofness of some labor leaders about his appearance or personality; he lives among shipworkers and they come to him with their troubles, personal and professional. Two cases are typical.

In the wake of the present comparative prosperity which trade union victories have won for shipworkers, an obnoxious type of gadfly pestered many of the men: magistrates, usually, from nearby rural parts, who made the rounds of finance companies, bought up bad debts of shipworkers incurred in depression and pre-union days and put on the legal screws, including the garnisheeing of pay envelopes. Unfortunately for their little speculation, many of these gentlemen were careless about the statute of limitations; the union took decisive steps and the racket evaporated.

More formidable were racketeer landlords who were given to singling out the homes of shipworkers and raising rents from 10 to 15 per cent. A union committee went into action promptly and got results, but this approach could only be a stop-gap; with industries expanding their payrolls and workers pouring in from all sides looking for homes, the situation called for something more fundamental. Out of a huddle in union headquarters in Cooper Street came a project that has made housing history, the so-called Camden plan, a novel scheme which not only makes home-ownership easy, but what might be called contingency-proof.

The federal government was then prodded, plans worked out, and the FWA was assigned the job of building the first unit of 500 homes in a colony to be known as Audubon Village, close to the yard. This was the first of four such units. The financing plan has the unique virtue of flexibility. The owner doesn't buy a specific home; he invests in a sort of floating or negotiable equity, "membership in the community." If his family expands or contracts, he can move to a larger or smaller home. No down payment is required. Amortizing payments are made through the Mutual Home Ownership Association, on the board of which the union's housing committee is heavily represented.

Thus, thanks to union initiative, the families of two thousand workers on the ships we need to win the war are enabled to live normal lives in homes of their own close to their work, free of the usual drawbacks and risks attendant upon home buying in times of scarcity and rising values.

Admiral Land has called labor the bottleneck of bottlenecks in shipbuilding, and on this one point at least Green sees eye to eye with the Chairman of the Maritime Commission. No one appreciates it better, and no one recognized it earlier. Green has been saying the same thing for years, and, moreover, has been doing something about it, when complacency reigned in other quarters. The bottleneck is not a hopeless bottleneck because of a backlog of skilled labor attracted to and held in the industry during the past seven years by good wages and good working conditions brought about chiefly if not exclusively through aggressive collective bargaining and militant trade union action —Green's doing. We are late in learning the lesson of the benefits all of us can derive from a strong trade union movement with a sense of its responsibilities and an appreciation of its rights.

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## Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THE New York *Times* gave prominent position and ample space last Sunday (May 24) to a highly significant pastoral letter issued in Spain by the Bishop of Calahorra, in the province of Burgos, in which the condemnation of the racial ideology of nazism by the Catholic Church, speaking especially through the medium of the encyclical letter of Pope Pius XI, "Mit Brennender Sorge," was the most prominent feature. The entire text of this forthright repudiation of the basic doctrine of nazism by the head of the Church was included in Bishop Garcia's letter to the faithful clergy and laity of his own important diocese, together with pastoral letters issued by the German and Dutch Catholic bishops denouncing the nazi persecution of the Church in their countries. The Spanish bishop's utterance is called forth by the growing circulation and increasing pressure of nazi propaganda in Spain, and while an important event in itself, is but one of many recent occurrences and observable trends pointing to the ever-strengthening opposition of Catholic Church authorities in Spain, Portugal and also in Latin America, to the propaganda of the nazis and fascists.

That invaluable bulletin *International Correspondence,* to which we have referred before, that interpretative news service gathered and distributed by the Center of Information Pro Deo (CIP) now centered in Lisbon, after having been driven out of its former headquarters in Brussels, and with at least two of its former directors dying as martyrs in nazi prisons, in its most recent bulletin devotes a good deal of its space to an article which reveals very clearly the extent to which the Catholic bishops of Latin America are combatting the nazi propaganda so extensively spread in all the South and Central American countries. As the article points out, there is in all parts of Latin America a wide-spread and deeply rooted resentment of "Yanquis," of United States imperialism in particular, and of many aspects of North American religion and culture. Much of this is based upon historical causes no longer operative, but it would be naïve to expect "a change of heart as the result of a few agreements or a few North American good-will speeches." But since the tradition and sentiments of the people of Latin America, as CIP points out, are inherently Catholic, "for this reason the attitude of the native hierarchy is enormously important—and the hierarchy is doing a unique work in clarifying the present world situation in a way that will be understood in all Latin American circles. For the very first time there is a genuine hope that certain false conceptions will be permanently destroyed."

As far back as 1936, it seems, the Argentine bishops in a joint pastoral letter warned Catholics against "that form of exaggerated nationalism which proclaims total submission of the individual to the State." In 1938 again the bishops united in reiterating their warning and instruction, and this time they added a specific condemnation of "the doctrine of racism which maintains superiority because of race and asserts that racial instincts established in the blood are the origins of religion and the juridical order." And once again, in this present year, the Argentine bishops jointly reaffirm their warnings. Bishop Barrere of Tucuman, in a separate letter issued in Lent, asserted that "he who stands up against nazism performs a grave duty and takes part in a real crusade to defend not only the independence of all peoples but also the Church and Christian, as well as human civilization, which is threatened in its fundamental principles and most sacred institutions. Honor, therefore, be to the allied nations who give the blood of their sons in this noble cause."

No less than fifty-eight bishops of many Latin American countries have written letters to the editor of the *Noticioso Catholico,* published at Buenos Aires, taking a stand against the pagan totalitarian and racial doctrines and practices of the nazis. In fact it seems that in Latin America an increasing number of bishops are using the method of letter writing to the Catholic press, especially to those periodicals which have been founded for the express purpose of fighting nazism, in order to influence their people directly.

Perhaps the bishops of Latin America have by this time well digested the hard lessons given in the facts of the situation in Germany, where at first, when the nazis entered the arena of political and journalistic activities, the Church authorities in most of the German states promptly detected and firmly denounced the anti-religious trends of the movement, but later, when the movement captured supreme authority in the nation, withdrew their condemnation in the hope that the nazis would keep the solemn promises made in their concordats with the Vatican—only to be deceived. It is to be hoped that our press will follow the example of the New York *Times* and follow the development of the opposition to nazism on the Catholic front in Latin America and Spain. The secular editors could find no more reliable source of news, or, certainly, of correct interpretation, than CIP.

# Communications

### EMERGENCE OF AN AMERICAN ART

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: May one who has admired Jerome Mellquist's discerning contributions to your pages take exception to James W. Lane's estimate of Mellquist's "The Emergence of An American Art" in the May 15 COMMONWEAL?

Mellquist's informal style is deceptive. His studied avoidance of didacticism makes him superficially *seem* "one to whom surfaces have more importance than background"; but Mr. Lane's own review affords ample evidence of the acuteness of Mellquist's perceptions.

Whistler, Mr. Lane objects, is given twice the coverage of Sargent. Whyever not? Mellquist's discussion of Sargent strikes me as extraordinarily generous. But he rightly recognizes Sargent as a gifted manipulator of paint, whereas Whistler, for all his limitations, was a

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creative artist. In correcting Mellquist's statement that "Whistler focussed" to "Whistler *soft-focussed,*" Mr. Lane exposes himself to his own charge. The soft-focussed effect of Whistler's paintings is a surface effect. Mellquist refers to Whistler's modification of impressionism by correcting its characteristic dispersion through focussing upon a chief point of interest, as a camera does. Future generations of American artists who scorned Whistler's lyrical blurring did not, however, scorn to make free use of his practice of area-spotting.

Mr. Lane asks: "If American art was to emerge, why did it need Europe at all?" As well ask: "If present-day America was to emerge, why did it need Europe?" "The Eight did not need Europe to go down among the people." Granted. But they needed Europe to paint the people. The Eight didn't pretend to be primitives; the bulk of them studied abroad; they borrowed freely from Hals, Goya, Velasquez, Manet, Daumier, Renoir. None of them was a really first-rate artist, but they worked to extend art, not to constrict it as the present-day American Scene cultists do.

Like Mr. Lane, I don't agree with all of Mellquist's emphases and appraisals. But I found his book a welcome antidote to the philistine critics of Thomas Craven's ilk who confuse a national art with a sterile, reactionary, provincial one.

DAVID BURNHAM.

## THE GREAT REPUBLIC

Jacksonville, Florida.

TO the Editors: Reviewing "The Great Republic" by Ross J. S. Hoffman, Joseph N. Moody (May 8) states flatly: "The League of Nations is dead." Factually this statement is incorrect. The League is still alive. Its last Assembly met in December, 1939, to consider Russian aggression in Finland; the Hague Court worked till May, 1940; the central bureaus of the International Labor Office have been set up and are functioning in Montreal and, only seven months ago, in October, 1941, a meeting of the I.L.O. took place in New York. The Emergency Committee of the I.L.O. is now meeting in London. Here and there League agencies are doing their best to assure continuity and are working especially on economic planning for the future. The League of Nations Associations are still active in England and in America.

But if, indeed, the League were dead, because of the war, I still would cry: "Long Live the League!"—and I am sure many Christian democrats will say this with me.

For the League—in spite of inherent deficiencies—stood for a great improvement in international relationships; its moral and legal principles were and are sound, were and are based on natural law.

It has become customary to attribute faults and mistakes to the League, seen as an institution, as an impersonal body, faults and mistakes which are imputable, in fact, to the men who represented—in the Assembly or League Committees—their respective governments. And public opinion has been divided: imperialist tories, international capitalists, fascists, nazis, nationalists opposed the League, of course, and with them, alas, many Catholics. As they were in the past, these same people, in England, in America and in other countries, are still against the League. But the Allied powers, if they win the war—as we hope and believe they will do—have this alternative for a future world order: either a League of Nations (modified and improved in form) or Allied rule (Anglo-American-Russian rule) over the world.

I hope that all English and American Catholics—whatever their attitudes in the past and their judgment of the past—will repudiate any imperial conception for a future order and, following the Catholic Association for International Peace in Washington, will insist on determining a true and Christian order of international cooperation in an international commonwealth.

For such an order the League of Nations presents, in my opinion, the only possible instrument.

LUIGI STURZO.

# *The Stage & Screen*

## *L'Annonce Faite à Marie*

PAUL CLAUDEL'S plays have been called "poetic arsenals against the modern world." It was an admirer who coined the phrase, but it does M. Claudel less than justice.

"L'Annonce Faite à Marie" is a *mystère*—a medieval miracle play—but a *mystère* written by a modern. By an active present-day diplomat and world-traveler whose affinities include not only Saint John of the Cross and Bernard of Clairvaux but equally Rimbaud, Bergson, William James, George Meredith, Joseph Conrad. His modern approach to mysticism is perhaps best summed up in these key words from "L'Annonce": "Blessed is he who suffers, *and who knows why.*" The "Catholic Renaissance" in French letters which stems from Claudel is not simply a revival of archaic forms and dogma; it is the extension of Catholic tradition to fit the complications and compulsions of modern life. Both the psychology and theology of "L'Annonce" are subtilized immeasurably beyond the simple allegories of the original form. The play's triumph is to retain, over the subtilization, the direct spiritual force of its prototypes.

The central situation is the ageless one of two sisters, one spiritual, one fleshly, who love the same man. Misinterpreting an innocent action of the former, he repudiates her and marries the latter. It requires a miracle and a murder to arrive at the final resolution: "What is the worth of the world compared to life? and what is the worth of life if not to be given?"

It's a long play, four hours of exalted dialogue, which makes extraordinary demands upon an audience. Many have held that Claudel's plays are more satisfactorily read than acted; but his verse, surely, gains by being spoken. Marcel Raymond has described the *verset Claudélien* as "the natural gesticulation of thought"; Claudel himself names his strongly regular rhythm

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*"l'iambe fondamental"*—the pulsating strong and weak beats corresponding to the life-process of breathing. The readings of Mme. Ludmilla Pitoëff's company were uncommonly sensitive, whether in the passages of earthly passion or religious ecstasy. Especially memorable were the lyrical love scene between Violaine (Mme. Pitoëff) and Jacques (Youl Bryner), and the unique Christmas Eve scene in the snow, where Mara (Varvara Pitoëff) demands that her sister work a miracle to save her daughter's life. (*At the Barbizon Plaza. Performances will be given June 3 and 4.*)

### *The Strings, My Lord, Are False*

"THE STRINGS, My Lord, Are False" is another instance that total war can't be contained within the three walls of a stage set. Paul Vincent Carroll writes of the blitz in Scotland from first-hand experience with a rescue squad. It was, understandably, an experience which shrieked aloud for explication. But it also, again understandably, appears to have induced a degree of shell shock in the sympathetic mind that conceived "Shadow and Substance" and "The White Steed." Carroll can't quite bring himself to confront directly the full implications of total war. His play is premature. He hasn't yet fully digested his experience; he gives the appearance of asking his audience to understand something he doesn't understand himself: to accept values his private scruples resist.

The play's central character is that favorite of Carroll's, the mellow, understanding, whiskey-tippling Catholic canon who tends his flock with patriarchal devotion. His enemies are the intolerant city prelates who mistrust his liberalism, and the self-seeking local politicians who divert the food rations and trade on the Black Market. His friends are those who have need of him, regardless of creed. These crowd into the refuge room in his presbytery and, when bombs drop, into the crypt of his church; a routine "cross-section." The heroic telephone operator; the reformed prostitute; the pacifist who turns hero under fire; the high-minded chief warden who finally sees his way to pardoning his canteenist sweetheart who is carrying another man's child; the Canon's faithful servant-woman; the crazed religious fanatic.

The production is middling. Howard Bay's sets are grade A; Elia Kazan, the director, is more successful in shaping tableaux than in simplifying the script's considerable traffic problems. After the first scene, Walter Hampden loses control of the Canon, and Ruth Gordon is badly miscast as the erring canteenist. The most vivid performances were Art Smith's as a scrappy communist, Philip Bourneuf's as the pacifist, Will Lee's as the Odets-Saroyan Wandering Jew, and Margot Grahame's as the prostitute-midwife. Of the disconcertingly assorted accents, my favorite belonged to an eight-year-old red-head whose name I can't trace in the program. (*At the Royale.*)

### *Uncle Harry*

ANYONE who would enjoy to eliminate a few relatives can get some excellent pointers from "Uncle Harry." Indeed, anyone who has a mystery play to write


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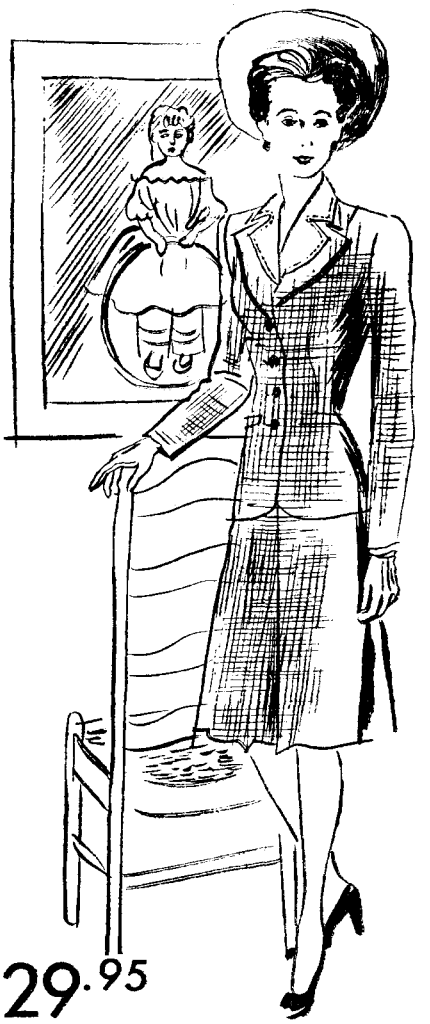

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should carefully ponder "Uncle Harry." It's the quiet sort of mystery; not really a mystery at all, since the murderer gives himself away in the prologue; it conscientiously avoids all the usual suspenseful devices of melodrama. Yet it rates absolutely top ranking for ingenuity, psychology and sheer good writing.

Even his fiancée called Harry Quincey "Uncle Harry." Always so considerate, so thoughtful, so self-effacing—the sort of fellow who wouldn't harm a fly. Lived with his two sisters who smothered him with spoiling. Even when they broke up his romance from selfish motives, it never occurred to him to assert himself. Until, one night—but I hope you will go to the Broadhurst to watch for yourself how he worked out his perfect crime: his too-perfect crime, as he discovers, when he tries to confess.

The acting of the cast headed by Joseph Schildkraut and Eva Le Gallienne is as skillful and trenchant as the dialogue; and the sets are Howard Bay at his excellent best. Here is a dangerous rival to "Angel Street." *(At the Broadhurst.)*

DAVID BURNHAM.

### *To Thine Own Self Be True*

IF YOU were one of the enthusiastic readers of *"This Above All,"* you're not going to approve of the changes made in the film. But if you were only mild about Eric Knight's novel about class problems in war-time England, you'll find the film to your liking. It is in fact the most interesting movie that Hollywood has made about this war. Its hero is a deserter—an embittered youth who walked out on the army (even after proving a hero at Dunkirk) because he saw the inefficiency and unpreparedness of its leaders, most of whom came from the upper classes. Its heroine, a member of this wealthy, aristocratic group, wants to assert herself as an individual and a democrat. To her family's amazement, she joins the WAAF as a private. She falls in love with the deserter, gives herself to him and strives to make him see that now is not the time to fight the class struggle, that it is better to accept present day England with all its faults than Hitler with his worse ones. Lined up with the girl in her effort to persuade the boy to return to his regiment are his good friend and fellow soldier, and a rector on whom the deserter stumbles as he's running away. "You are a symbol of our age," says this straightforward minister, "an age of reason that has driven out faith. You're not running because you're a coward. Your mind and soul are locked in battle. Trust your feelings, not your reason." The deserter knows what he must do. Although the final scene is confused (principally because its makers were not certain how to wind up the film) it closes with the hero's saying, "It's going to be a different world when this is over. But first we've got to win this war." Darryl F. Zanuck has given the film first-rate production; Anatole Litvack has directed his expensive cast in good cinema style. Tyrone Power shows an acting ability that he has never exhibited before; and Joan Fontaine shines with a new loveliness as the blueblood who sides with the people. Her long speech, on the England that is worth fighting for, is done with effective beauty. The supporting cast, led by Thomas Mitchell and including Alexander Knox, Nigel Bruce, Gladys Cooper, Philip Merivale, is outstanding. Although R. C. Sherriff's script is well written, it falls down in not making clear the facts of the deserter's background that led him to despise the upper classes. While the film deserves censure for going emotionally soft at times and sinking to the level of a tear-jerker, it merits praise for putting over dramatically its message: "This above all, to thine own self be true."

There seems to be still some doubt as to how the nazis should be handled in films. One school says kill 'em with ridicule. Another says the nazis have proved they're not fools; therefore respect your enemy's fighting power if you want to beat 'em. *"The Wife Takes a Flyer"* belongs to the former. Set in Holland, it concerns an RAF flier (Franchot Tone) who pretends to be the cracked husband of an attractive Dutch woman (Joan Bennett). Marital fidelity takes a beating when this wife divorces her husband who is in an asylum while Tone continues the masquerade. Director Richard Wallace, realizing the sketchiness of the story, concentrated his efforts on the nazi major in the army of occupation. Allyn Joslyn plays the rôle to the hilt and steals the picture from the romantic leads. Satirizing nazi officers with Heil Hitlers, preferences for the Germans, and more swish than swastikas, Joslyn makes fun of the nazis as no actor has since Chaplin's "The Great Dictator." The script has some hilarious lines, the funniest of which is the "What! No caviar!" quip. But the question remains: can we beat the Germans if we continue to treat them as a joke?

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

# Books of the Week

## Two Regions

*Maryland Main and Eastern Shore. Hulbert Footner and Louis Ruyl. Appleton.* $5.00.

THIS is an unusual book, always interesting, and to a lover of the Eastern Shore, frequently exasperating. Possibly the two authors are not entirely successful in their collaboration. However, neither of them appear to be particularly interested in the early days of Maryland; both dislike and distrust any infiltration of people from other sections.

This seems slightly odd for one who continually prides himself on being an "adopted son." Such a lack of interest in early times seems unaccountable when we remember this is the same person who bought, lovingly restored, and wrote a fascinating book concerning the old estate of "Sir Charles Gift."

The aversion to "foreigners," as those from other sections are locally known, reaches its height when attention is turned to the Eastern Shore. Because some of the fine old homes of Queen Anne and Talbot Counties have been restored by those who moved to the shore and they, too, have become "adopted sons," these counties are scorned as frivolous and hard drinking. Yet a large proportion of the old places are still in the hands of the descendants of the builders. Surely, a few lines could have been spared for such places as "Sally's Delight," "Gross Coate," "Morland's Chance," "The Rest" and "The Anchorage" (on opposite sides of the river) to name a few of them.

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There are several counties of Maryland still safe from outside influence, apparently, for the descriptions of the purely farming communities are poetic in their eloquence. Many are practically unchanged since the middle of the last century. This joy in simplicity contrasts with the exhaustive description of Baltimore which occupies nearly a third of the book. While the writing itself is not uneven, the change in viewpoint is so complete as to make one wonder whether originally a series of short articles was planned rather than a book.

This suspicion, if correct, might account for the scant attention to some points. Beautiful and historic Annapolis is lightly dealt with and with no enthusiasm. St. Mary's County as the first settlement in Maryland would seem to merit more than a passing interest.

A great part of the charm consists in the mass of local traditions, stories of local characters, Negroes and White, all sympathetically told. Altogether it is a most contradictory book and one destined to provoke much controversy.

CONSTANCE SKILLIN.

*New Hampshire Borns a Town. Marion Nicholl Rawson. Dutton.* $3.50.

IN ONE CHAPTER after another of this book, the author brings to life once more the early days of towns and villages, some of which are now still inhabited, in part at least, by the descendants of the early settlers there, while others are overgrown by birch, maple and evergreen, with here and there stone gate-way posts and cellar holes and fallen walls along the abandoned roads. Town records dating back to the days of King George the Third as quoted here, ring to our ears in the nasal, and at times, if not invariably, ungrammatical, yet most expressive Yankee tone of those old days, when by way of ox team and horse power, families, including grandparents and grandchildren—the latter to be counted by the dozen in some instances—made their slow progress beneath the towering primeval forest growth to where they finally established their homesteads. Even after clearings of several acres had been made on the highland, the sun was visible only for a few hours at midday.

What an astonishing change has taken place in farming here during the last three centuries! From spading up the deep rich forest mould between the rotting stumps, saving and transplanting for pasture every tuft of grass roots that might chance to be dug up where potatoes were planted, to pasture hay field and orchard covering three-fourths of the land amid country towns and villages as it was in the nineteenth century. And now the new forest growth in its turn once more is shutting out the view from one horizon to another.

Thankful indeed we may well be that "New Hampshire Borns a Town," together with Marion Nicholl Rawson's other charming books along the same line, holds up to our eyes and those of generations yet to come, such a perfectly drawn artist's picture of it all.

WILLIAM EVERETT CRAM.

BIOGRAPHY

*Housman: 1897-1936. Grant Richards. Oxford.* $4.00. *Robert Bridges: A Study of Traditionalism in Poetry. Albert Guérard, Jr. Harvard Univ.* $3.50.

MOST modern readers know the Shropshire Lad, and unhappily the late Laureate is only a thin ghost in anthologies; yet Robert Bridges was undoubtedly the better poet and the better man. Housman labored his one

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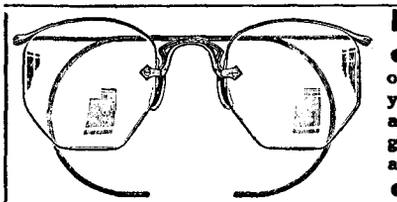

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mood to great advantage; his sense for the apt word was absolute and he knew and used well the devices of rhetoric but he was and will be only a poet for adolescents. Bridges, on the other hand, scorned the things that made Housman popular; his art was subdued and subtle, his intellectual interests wide and deep. He aimed his work deliberately to please the discriminating few among his fellow craftsmen, whereas Housman sang to the crowd.

Mr. Richards' book is potentially useful to scholars in much the same sense that, say, Cottle's "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey" is useful. He has provided a mass of personalia and small facts which some future biographer may bring within ordered bounds. The volume is made up of Housman's letters to Mr. Richards, arranged in chronological order and separated by enlightening comments and explanations. There are several brief appendices by other hands, containing additional studies and genealogical material. As Mr. Richards was Housman's publisher and intimate over a long period of years it is safe to assume that the data is authentic. Despite Mr. Richards' loyal advocacy, Housman still remains Housman; a cynical, sybaritic don whose classically perfect verses are exercises in skill rather than poems.

Mr. Guérard's study of Bridges is exhaustive and competent from the point of view of scholarship, but the reader is teased by the suspicion that the author is much more interested in Bridges' work as a subject of investigation than he is moved by its merits as poetry. The study is interesting in its revelation of what the poet and his critic have in common. They are both devout rationalists of the old school, that rationalism so completely satisfying to the academic mind. It is a little discouraging to find a man of our time who hugs about himself the patchwork quilt of 19th century evolutionary eclecticism and assures his readers that it is a living and vital philosophy. To accept today the bored, exquisite, Chopen-at-evening attitudes of Santayana is not to rise above the blood and sweat of our times but to pull the bed-clothes over one's head. Bridges had an excuse for maintaining this outworn position, although it turned his "Testament of Beauty" into a sort of display-case for the romantic Hellenism of the 19th century; Mr. Guérard must be curiously obtuse to regard it as possible any longer.

There is an irritating tone to this book that can be attributed to an affectation of omniscience in all studies and literatures. There are numerous, technical discussions of philosophical matters which do not quite come off, and an airy disposal of philosophical positions other than the author's which is too often posited on misconception and ignorance. On the good side, however, Mr. Guérard gives a lively and well-conducted drubbing to the fanatical practitioners of symbolism and reasserts with vigor and good sense the merits and present validity of the English poetic tradition. His book contains an interesting appendix which deals with Bridges' prosodic theories and experiments.

J. G. E. HOPKINS.

*John Philip Kemble. The Actor and His Theatre. Herschel Baker. Harvard. $4.00.*

ON April 21, 1794, Sheridan opened his new Drury Lane Playhouse, the Radio City Music Hall of London, for it had a seating capacity of 3,600 with possible gross receipts a night of $4,000. The manager, John Philip Kemble, had prepared a gala performance of


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"Macbeth" for the opening, with himself and his great sister, Mrs. Siddons, in the leading rôles, and with their younger brother, Charles, as Malcolm. Garrick had always played Macbeth in the scarlet and red of a British officer, but Kemble, following Macklin's lead, had accustomed the public to some degree of realism. As Macbeth, he wore a belted plaid over ring mail, but topped with waving funereal plumes, which were plucked off one night by Sir Walter Scott who substituted an eagle's feather, which Kemble swore was worth three rounds of applause. For this gala "Macbeth," Kemble had arranged some elaborations for the supernatural scenes in which the fair Mrs. Crouch appeared as an elegant witch in a conical hat and powdered hair and ranged in front of her cauldron were a row of hobgoblins headed by a small boy called Edmund Kean. Excited by Macbeth's entrance, Kean stumbled, and the whole row of goblins went down like ninepins. According to Mr. Baker, Kean used to boast in later years that he had done it on purpose, but we feel the other explanation of his wearing braces and losing his balance is more likely, as he could hardly have guessed as a child that he was to be Kemble's greatest rival.

That Kemble was able to maintain his position as ranking actor on the British stage for thirty years was due in part to his statuesque presence, his sister's genius and his own intelligence and ability at declamation. It was an age of great orators. Kemble's unique social prominence he owed in part to his father's ardent faith. The Kembles of the Welsh marches had always been Catholics and recusants and could number a martyred priest, the Venerable John Kemble, in their heritage. Though only a lowly strolling player and the son of a wigmaker, John Philip's father, mindful of family tradition, sent his eldest son to the English College at Douai in the hope he might join the priesthood. After two years there, John Philip found his vocation lay instead in the theater, but his intensive study of the classics stood his gentility in good stead in an age when scholarship was considered an upper class accomplishment. "Glorious John" not only frequented the best houses in London, but collected a library which he later sold to the Duke of Devonshire and which is now in the Huntington Library in California; it included Latin, French, Italian and Spanish authors with an original Shakespeare folio, 400 plays and 40 volumes of playbills. The good blood of his forbears was apparent in Kemble's distinguished personality, which endowed his Richard III and Lear with real royalty. "Who can forget that white discrowned head," asked the poet Campbell. Even the supercritical Leigh Hunt was disarmed by Kemble's Lear, and when Maurice Evans this winter addressed an empty chair in the banquet scene of "Macbeth," he was following the precedent set by Kemble, who dispensed with Banquo's usual gory-headed apparition. William Winter thinks that Kemble's Hamlet exerted more influence on the tradition of the English stage than has any other performance. Kemble's position in the theater was indeed so godlike that he sometimes overstepped his prerogative, as on the day of his wedding to Mrs. Brereton, an actress, when he disappeared after the ceremony and not only forgot to attend but even to order the dinner planned at his house, where the bride and her mother supped alone on some cheese and red herring from the eighteenth century equivalent of a delicatessen.

Mr. Herschel Baker of Texas University has made a more protracted search through British and American


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sources than his hero seems altogether to justify. Kemble's life was passed in a London reflected in innumerable other pages, his managerial career in outline is of necessity, repetitious. Had Mr. Baker ever been professionally connected with the theater, himself, he might have sifted from his copious information many fascinating details of theater management and stage business. As it is he has added very little to William Winter's estimate of Kemble's interpretation of Shakespeare. For the general reader it lacks romance, as the glow that irradiates the Kemble family seems mysteriously dulled in Mr. Baker's scholarly and accurate study. E. V. R. WYATT.

FICTION

*The Gates of Aulis. Gladys Schmitt. Dial. $2.75.*

IT IS always difficult to write about a work of genius; and people like Miss Katherine Woods of the New York *Times* "Book Review" have not made it any easier by their using all the good words on poor and great books alike. It is doubly hard to review a work of genius when it is strongly tainted with decadence, as so many works of genius are in our time. But let us state it baldly now at the beginning, that Gladys Schmitt is a genius and with one novel has stepped into the very first rank of American writers.

The lost generation of our time are the young who, with no God, no sense of morality save that pertaining to the economic, no Bible but Marx and Freud, have undertaken to bring about a revolution. Miss Schmitt takes two of these people for her protagonists, a brother and sister, Carl and Ellie Hasselmann. More talented and more intelligent than most of the young Marxians who agonized through the thirties, they are also the products of a strange heredity. A number of their immediate ancestors have felt the desire to sacrifice themselves for other people, and have frequently immolated themselves accordingly, not always within the bounds of prudence.

This strain persists in the brother and sister, both of them sensitive to the point of morbidity. With the brother, a sociologist, it takes the form of wanting to aid Humanity, The Proletariat or People. The sister is interested more in individuals, and those who are physically or spiritually lame, halt or blind can command her too ready sympathy.

Miss Schmitt is so Freudian a writer as to be almost old fashioned, and the difference between brother and sister is explained in strictly Freudian terms. Carl, like so many young Americans, cannot relate sex to love. He goes to prostitutes, but cannot bring himself to a physical relationship with the girl he loves. Ellie, conversely, has trouble in thinking of love in other than sexual terms. Her bitterness against Christianity seems to stem from this for some obscure reason. Miss Schmitt apparently shares Ellie's feelings about Christianity, and stacks the cards somewhat by making the sole half-hearted exponent of Christianity in the book a homosexual, who had once thought of becoming a Catholic, but changed his mind after looking at a tankful of fishes in the aquarium, preying on each other. Such a sight and the existence of God were mutually exclusive, he concluded. Tsk, tsk.

Carl follows his hereditary tendency toward immolation by becoming the assistant to and disciple of Dr. Stephen Maurer, a radical college professor, who slips effortlessly and too painlessly into intellectual fascism, leaving Carl bitter and bewildered. Ellie follows her inclination toward sacrifice by becoming the mistress of stuffy Eugene McVeagh, a conventional capitalist and a casualty of World War I. McVeagh is ye complete horse's-tail. Anti-unionist, a lecher and a liar, he wins Ellie through her pity as he had won other women through money or favors. She foresees a tragic ending even at the beginning of their relationship, but goes through with it, freely accepting it, visualizing herself as another Iphigenia on the temple steps at Aulis. That her physical relationship with McVeagh seems to improve her ability as a painter lends depth to their affair, or so she thinks. So that the inevitable severance is emotionally devastating to her.

The author is very sympathetic to Ellie, condoning everything she does and thinks: her sympathy for sick hangers-on of the arts; her scorn of George Vallos, the Pole who loves Ellie and is involved in the bitterness and difficulty of male chastity; her generally amoral attitude. Many readers will have less patience with Ellie and some a definite dislike of her. Yet such is the accuracy with which Miss Schmitt writes that the objective truth about people shines through even when it is obvious that Miss Schmitt herself believes in Ellie's many fallacies.

I could not read this book without thinking of what a priest who is now a bishop once said to me about prudence being the first and greatest of the virtues because it included all the rest. Ellie sinned against prudence more than any fictional character I have ever read of. I think Miss Schmitt knows this, but simply, like Ellie, does not care.

Miss Schmitt's prose can fairly be called great. At once rich and supple, it does all that she wishes it to do. The book is somewhat marred by its slightly excessive length (650 pages) and a tendency toward sentimentality in the last chapter.

But this is the best book ever done about the young proletarians of our time, the people who have been concerned with sins of injustice to the exclusion of any concern about the sins of the flesh. The conventional young Christians of our time have been concerned about sins of the flesh to the exclusion of any deep feeling or concern, until recently, about sins of injustice. As to who has been the more justified, I leave to the theologians . . . and record here only a more than passing regret that genius is once again tainted with decadence; and the satisfaction that American letters has a new and authentic genius.

HARRY SYLVESTER.

*The Rock and the Wind. Vivien R. Bretherton. Dutton. $2.75.*

AFTER reading an adventurous, picturesque book such as this one is, one speculates about what his reaction to it would have been if it had been written before the era of Hollywood. For it is almost impossible to read a chapter in this book without visualizing, in advance, how it will look on the screen. However, it is scarcely fair to novelists to construe their work as though they wrote with one eye on Hollywood agents.

This story would make a good movie for those who like costume pictures, much scenery, fighting, a dash of "history" and the constant certainty that virtue is about to be rewarded in some nice, comfortable way. As a novel, the story itself is fairly interesting but the style is too elegant and the characters rather dull in spite of the exciting things they do. The book is very moral and from some points of view—especially for readers of no serious literary interests—it is to be preferred to many other popular books of the moment. RUTH BYRNS.

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# The Inner Forum

## The San Antonio Meetings

APPLICATION of the moral law to current and post-war problems—national and international, social and economic—was the theme of meetings of the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems and the Catholic Association for International Peace at San Antonio, Texas, May 20, 22. Archbishop Lucey of San Antonio sponsored both meetings.

The opening session, according to *Catholic Action*, attracted the largest audience ever assembled for a regional meeting of the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems. At the dinner meeting, which served as a climax to the proceedings, there were more than 200 AFL and CIO members; some 30 representatives from Negro parishes and a number of Sisters from the College of the Incarnate Word and Our Lady of the Lake College were also among those in attendance.

Archbishop Lucey spoke on the "Challenge of the Encyclicals." In the course of his remarks he declared that management, labor and government are challenged to organize and regulate industry and agriculture for their own well-being and for the common good. "Since the machinery of social organization cannot operate when lubricated with the sand of economic immorality, our ancient Church must teach men the knowledge and practice of the moral law so that this structure of social life will be permeated with the good oil of justice and charity. . . . Christian people have not carried their faith and their morality into public life, into social and political life, into the relations of the nation." William J. Green, of the Farm Security Administration, presented some of the serious present-day rural problems and made a thorough analysis of the main causes of rural poverty.

Earlier in the session Father R. A. McGowan reviewed the work of the Association and emphasized the fact that Catholic social principals to be effective must apply to labor and employers as a whole.

At the CAIP meeting Monsignor John A. Ryan warned American Catholics against isolationism and not supporting the war effort. He spoke of two great obligations: "First, our obligation to help bring about a negotiated peace; second, the obligation to support some form of international organization to keep the peace that should follow the end of the war." He advocated "fervent and continued prayer" together with "avoidance of hate, of appeals to hatred, and of condemnation of a whole people because of the sins of its leaders." Archbishop Lucey deplored the apathy and short-sightedness on the part of Americans —not a few of them Catholics—in respect to the establishment of peace and justice in the world: "International relations, both political and economic, are human relations and they involve questions of right and wrong. The relations of the nations are subject to moral principles and the Church must from time to time make pronouncements in this field because morality and religion are involved. If, after the war we desire a lasting peace we must work for it, pray and plan for it." Much of the Catholic Association for International Peace agenda was devoted to peace aims and post-war planning.

## CONTRIBUTORS

*Harry Paxton HOWARD*, journalist and educator, returned last year to the US after 24 years in the Far East —5 in Japan and 19 in China. He is the author of a book on the socialist and labor movement in Japan, whence he was deported in 1922.

*Frank RAHILL* is a Philadelphia newspaperman long on the staff of the *Public Ledger*.

*Constance SKILLIN*, who is a native of New York, is now a resident of Talbot County on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

*William Everett CRAM* is a New Hampshire farmer, brother of Ralph Adams Cram, frequent contributor to THE COMMONWEAL, author of several books, among them, "Little Beasts of Field and Wood" and "American Animals."

*J. G. E. HOPKINS* writes stories and poetry and teaches at Notre Dame of Staten Island College. He is an editor of *Spirit* and treasurer of the Catholic Poetry Society of America.

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*Harry SYLVESTER* writes for *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's;* his novel, "Dearly Beloved," was published this spring.

*Ruth BYRNS* is a member of the faculty of the Fordham School of Education, New York.

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